On another occasion a group of men from Patanowä-teri arrived to explore with Kąobawä the possibility of peace between their two villages. They were brothers-in-law to him and were fairly certain that he would protect them from the village hotheads. One of the ambitious men in Kąobawä's group saw in this an opportunity to enhance his prestige and made plans to murder the three visitors. This man, Paruriwä, was a very cunning, treacherous fellow and quite jealous of Kąobawä's position as headman. He wanted to be the village leader and privately told me to address him as the headman. On this occasion Kąobawä let it be known that he intended to protect the visitors. For the better part of the day the village was in a state of suspense. Paruriwä and his followers were not to be found anywhere; a rumor spread that they had painted themselves black and were well armed. Kąobawä and his supporters, mostly his own brothers and brothers-in-law, remained in the village all day, their weapons close at hand. Late in the afternoon Paruriwä and his men appeared in their black paint and took up strategic posts around the village. He himself held an axe. He strutted arrogantly up to the visitors holding his axe as if he were ready to strike. The village became very quiet, and most of the women and children left. Neither Kąobawä nor the Patanowä-teri visitors batted an eyelash when Paruriwä approached, although the others were visibly nervous and sat up in their hammocks. Instead of striking the visitors with the axe as he appeared to suggest he was going to do, he invited one of them out to chant with him. Within seconds all three of the visitors had paired off with members of Paruriwä's group and were chanting passionately with them, explaining the reasons for their visit and giving their justification for the state of hostilites.

The crisis has been averted because of Kąobawä's implied threat that he would defend the visitors with force. A number of men in Paruriwä's group were visitors from Monou-teri; their headman had been killed a few months earlier by the Patanowä-teri. When Paruriwä failed to go through with his plan, they left the village in a rage, hoping to recruit a raiding party in their own village and ambush the visitors when they left.

Kąobawä realized that the visitors would not be safe until they got back home, since the Monou-teri would attempt to intercept them. He visited me that night and asked me to take the visitors back to their village at dawn in my canoe, knowing that I had already planned a trip there for the immediate future. After I agreed to accelerate my own plans, he proceeded to give me instructions about the trip: I was not to stop at any of the villages along the Orinoco River to visit, for all of them were at war with the Patanowä-teri and would shoot my companions on sight. The Patanowä-teri men lay on the floor of my canoe and covered themselves with a tarp when we passed these villages. The people on the bank shouted curses at me for not stopping to visit and give them trade goods. At this time the Patanowä-teri were being raided by about a dozen different villages. We had to cover part of the distance to their village on foot, proceeding very cautiously because of the danger of raiders. At one point the men showed me the spot where a Hasaböwä-teri raiding party had killed a Patanowä-teri woman a week earlier. Thus, Kąobawä not only protected the visitors while they were in his village but he also arranged a "safe-conduct" for their return.

Kąobawä keeps order in the village when people get out of hand. Paruriwä, for example, is particularly cruel to his four wives and beats them mercilessly for even slight provocations. None of his wives have brothers in the village, and few people are courageous enough to interfere with Paruriwä when he is angry. On one occasion Kąobawä was holding a feast for the members of an allied village. His preparations were being

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Fig. 5-5. Hukushikawë leading a raiding party against the Patanowë-teri.